A Study of the Epistle to Titus

Abstract

This study analyzes Paul's letter to Titus, a pastoral epistle focused on establishing godly church leadership and sound doctrine in the island of Crete. The apostle highlights the qualifications for elders, the essential link between theological truth and godly living, and the significance of good works as evidence of genuine faith. Paul contrasts faithful teaching with the destructive influence of false teachers while grounding his instructions in the profound truths of God's saving grace, the hope of eternal life, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the letter, Paul consistently urges believers to adorn the gospel through Christ-honoring conduct, preparing them to live faithfully in anticipation of Jesus Christ's glorious return.

Table of Contents

Titus Chapter 1 4

Opening Salutation 4

Paul's Apostolic Mission 4

The Elders 7

Home Life 7

Character 8

Doctrine 9

The Cretan Opposition 10

A Description of the Deceivers 11

A Christian Response to the Deceivers 12

A Description of the False Teaching 12

Titus Chapter 2 14

Pastoral Duties 14

Teaching for Men and Titus 15

Teaching for Women 17

Teaching for Workers 18

Theological Framework and Motivation for Ministry 19

Grace of God 19

Expectation of Christ's Return 21

Conclusion 22

Titus Chapter 3 24

Living as the Church in This World 24

The Christian in the World 24

The Revelation of God's Kindness and Love in Christ 25

Trustworthy Sayings 32

Final Instructions 33

Epistle to Titus Outline 35

Opening Salutation (1:1-4) *35*

The Elders (1:5-9) *35*

The Cretan Opposition (1:10-16) *37*

Titus 2 ..... *37*

Theological framework and motivation for ministry (2:11-15) *38*

Titus 3 ..... *38*

Living as the Church in this world (3:1-8) *38*

Final Instructions (3:9-15) *41*

Titus Chapter 1

Opening Salutation

The beginning of this letter, verses 1 through 4, is the longest and most detailed of the openings in the Pastoral letters. This may surprise you, as it did me. Except for the letters to Romans and Galatians, the opening of Titus contains more words than any other of the Apostle Paul's letters. What is also interesting is that most of the words in this opening appear in only one sentence in Greek.

Why is this? Why, in a short letter like Titus, which has only 46 verses, does Paul include such an intricate and detailed opening salutation? Why is there such a wealth of information, much of it doctrinal, between the first word, Paul, and the recipient's name, Titus?

Paul's Apostolic Mission

One interpretation I suggest is that the Apostle intends to explain the nature of his ministry and mission. Additionally, similar to 1 Timothy, Paul aims to convey his apostolic authority and the purpose of his mission. Although he has apostolic authority, he wanted to make it clear that people knew he would not misuse it. He states he is a "servant of God." The word "servant" here is the same Greek word for "slave" in the New Testament.

The primary goal of his apostolic mission, as shown in verse 1, is "for the faith of God's elect." In other words, his objective is to help those "chosen by God before the foundations of the world" (Ephesians 1:4) come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The biblical doctrine of election is a wonderful and glorious truth for Christians, or at least it should be. In many letters, the Apostle Paul connects the Old Testament chosen people of God, Israel, with New Covenant elect believers. And it is not just Paul who makes this connection. The Apostle Peter writes, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Dear ones, salvation from beginning to end is through the LORD's grace. As Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 2:10, "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may

obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul's main goal and deep desire were to be used by God to help the elect come to faith in Jesus Christ.
In verse 1, Paul's mission is not only for the "faith of God's elect" but also for "their knowledge of the truth." However, this is not just intellectual knowledge and understanding. Knowing the truth should lead to godliness, which means being Christlike and obedient to God. Christian, God desires your heart. Paul emphasizes multiple times in the pastoral letters the connection between knowing the truth and living godly. They should always go together. Remember 1 Timothy 6:3, "If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing."

Proclaiming to know the gospel but lacking concern for godliness is a trait of the false teachers in Crete. It is a sign of hypocrisy. Look at the last verse of chapter 1 of Titus: "They profess to know God but deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work" (Titus 1:16). The topic of "good works" in the Pastoral letters is an important duty for God's people. The Apostle Paul repeatedly emphasizes the importance of "good works." For this reason, true faith always results in good works.

As a pastoral concern, we must encourage those who love studying theology and seem to have extensive knowledge of the Scriptures to serve Christ through "good works." That is a key part of Paul's apostolic mission: preaching the truth that, by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, guides believers to a godly, Christlike life.

That brings us to Paul's third purpose for his apostolic mission. He wants God's people to live in hope of eternal life. We said Paul is an apostle "for the sake of the elect" and to provide knowledge of the truth that leads to godly living. Yet there is another reason he gives for the apostolic mission: to instill "hope of eternal life." In the opening of his second letter to Timothy, Paul states that his apostolic ministry is "according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:1).

The promise of eternal life is certain because it is based on the character of the eternal God. "God who never lies" has promised eternal life to His people even before the foundation of time. Look at chapter 3, verses 4 through 7. Paul writes about when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared; He saved us not because of works done by us in

righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17 should provide much reassurance: "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see the glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). The Word of God consistently reveals the origin of salvation and the promise of eternal life as part of God's gracious plan of redemption, established in eternity past.

In theology, this is known as the Covenant of Redemption. It is the covenant made within the triune Godhead, in which the Son entered this world and gave Himself to redeem a people for His own possession. Paul reminds Titus of one final purpose for his apostolic mission: to fulfill the commission God gave him by preaching the Word of God. Preaching the gospel was a core focus of the Apostles' ministry.

If you teach or preach, please resist the modern temptation to replace or shorten preaching time in the worship service with more music and songs. That seems to be happening in many churches worldwide. However, preaching has always been God's powerful way of drawing people to Christ. In another letter, writing to the Corinthian church, Paul wrote, "For the word of the cross (that is, the preached word) is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

The Apostle Paul never forgot that God had called him to preach the gospel. For Paul, there was no greater privilege. As part of God's eternal plan, preaching is essential for saving souls and strengthening believers. Writing to the church in Rome, he asked, "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?" (Romans 10:13 - 15).

Brothers, the churches need faithful, Christ-centered preaching. If God has called you to preach and the church has affirmed your gifts, consider it the highest privilege. Fulfill your calling to the glory of Jesus Christ. In chapter 2 of his Titus sermons, Calvin wrote on this verse that Paul "served God by dispensing the **treasure of the gospel** in which we have

assurance of salvation." When you preach, brothers, you are sharing the treasure of the gospel.

The Elders

Like at the start of 1 Timothy, Paul quickly states his reason for writing. In verse 5, he clarifies why he left Titus in Crete: "This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you."

Probably sometime after his release from prison in Rome, Paul evangelized on the island of Crete. The LORD blessed his efforts, and churches began to form in "every town," as verse 5 says. We don't know how long Paul stayed in Crete, but we do know that he couldn't remain there and needed Titus to continue the work.

Just as in 1 Timothy, which is a matter of some urgency, Paul provides instructions to Titus on the qualifications required to serve as an Elder. Much of Paul's guidance to Titus, though not all, is found in 1 Timothy 3. You will immediately notice, though, that there is no mention of a deacon in the letter to Titus.

Home Life

Circumstances were clearly different in Crete compared to Ephesus, where the Ephesian church had been established much longer. It makes sense that the apostles' primary focus was on establishing godly leadership, and Titus was assigned that role.

There are three areas where a potential elder should be "blameless" and "above reproach." Before that, four topics on Eldership provide a general overview. In verse 5, Paul uses the Greek word translated as "elders," presbyteros. In verse 7, he uses a different Greek word for the same office, translated as "overseer," episkopos, in our Bibles.

As with 1 Timothy, different words are used in the New Testament for elders: overseers, bishops, and sometimes shepherds. These terms refer to the same offices. The biblical pattern involves having multiple overseers, though this depends on God's providence. There may be times in newer, younger churches when having multiple elders isn't practical, and the process shouldn't be rushed. My point is that the goal of church planting is to appoint multiple elders.

Thirdly, we stated that all elders must be capable of teaching God's people. That is their primary role in the church. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul says they must be "able to teach." In Titus 1:9, the apostle states that the overseer must be "able to instruct in sound doctrine." Therefore, the overseer must have teaching gifts. He must not only be able to teach but also to refute error.

I don't think I mentioned this last point in 1 Timothy 3. The church as a whole should participate in the approval process. Brothers, an elder is not a dictator. He is a servant. The church must recognize and support his gifts and abilities.

The term "above reproach" essentially means unaccused. A person's character and conduct might not always be perfect, but they are free from any damaging moral or spiritual accusations. The Apostle Paul outlined the qualifications for church elders to Titus in three categories: a man's home life, character, and beliefs or doctrinal position.

We will start with the home. As one commentator said, "The home is regarded as the training ground for Christian leaders." Andreas Kostenberger writes, "Anyone who aspires to serve as an elder in the church, which involves exercising authority over the congregation, must properly exercise authority at home, with his children responding in obedience and submission."

The overseer's children are not required to be Christians. However, children must listen, obey, and respect their father at home. If we summarize the list, including both positive and negative traits, the main point that emerges is the need for self-control in verse 8. The list in Galatians 5 shows that this is also a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It serves as evidence of the Spirit's work in a person's life.

Character

The first list of five vices includes five areas that often tempt us: pride, temper, alcohol, power, and money. All five challenge each of us in the realm of self-control or self-mastery. Without self-control, a man is not fit to lead the church.

The Greek word "overbearing" was often used to describe a "peppery attitude," someone who gets easily irritated. Concerning drunkenness, the Scripture permits alcohol. The issue, however, is self-control. A pastor may face a social situation where alcohol is present, and their self-control is on display. The real question is whether drinking alcohol will be a poor witness for Christ or become a stumbling block for others.

He must not be violent. The gift of leadership often includes having a strong personality, but it should be exercised with care. We should follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in leadership. He led by example, not through force. He led with love and compassion. The elder must not be motivated by money. We can say that a pastor should be driven by service. That does not mean a pastor shouldn't receive proper compensation.

The virtues are mostly straightforward. They include being hospitable, as referenced in 1 Timothy 3:3, 1 Peter 4:9, Hebrews 13:2, and 3 John 8. Loving what is good has no exact equivalent in 1 Timothy 3. Being sensible or self-controlled is mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 2:2, and Titus 2:5. Being righteous or upright, which relates to respectability in 1 Timothy 3:2, is also found in Titus 2:12, Philippians 4:8, and Colossians 4:1. Being holy has no exact equivalent in 1 Timothy 3, but refer to 1 Timothy 2:8 and Hebrews 7:26. Self-controlled or disciplined appears in 1 Timothy 3:2.

Doctrine

In verse 9, the Apostle Paul highlights an Elder's essential understanding of truth. The Elder candidate "must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught." An elder in the church of Jesus Christ must be able to teach, exhort, and correct those who oppose the gospel truth.

John Calvin's commentary on this passage offers a clear summary of the twofold nature of a teaching ministry: "A pastor needs two voices, one for gathering the sheep and the other for driving away wolves and thieves. The Scripture provides him with the means to do both, and he who has been properly instructed in it will be able to lead those who are teachable and to refute the enemies of the truth. Paul emphasizes this dual purpose of Scripture when he states that he should be able both to exhort and to convict the gainsayers."

Verse 9 in Titus is equivalent to the qualification in 1 Timothy, "able to teach." The Elder must teach "sound" doctrine. Once again, one of Paul's favorite words for good doctrine is used, "sound" or "healthy" doctrine. One of John Calvin's quotes that I like about sound teaching says, "All trifles vanish away before solid, or sound, teaching."

Remember, the word "sound" that Paul uses comes from the Greek word that the English word "hygiene" is based on. There is unhealthy false doctrine and sound, healthy doctrine. Paul tells us that the elder must "hold firm" and cling to sound and healthy doctrine. Only by "holding firm" to the "trustworthy" truth of God's Word can an elder do the work God has for him.

This is what Paul emphasizes to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 3: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which can make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Brothers, if you desire to serve in pastoral ministry, the only way to fulfill this calling as God intends is by steadfastly holding to the Word of God. Amen.

The Cretan Opposition

As we have seen in Paul's letters, he often begins a new thought with the words "But" or "For." Here, he uses the latter. This "for" links what he is about to write with what he just finished saying. The apostle is now going to describe the false teachers, and this calls for proper leadership to "rebuke those who contradict" sound doctrine, as mentioned at the end of verse 9.

There are three main sections: a description of the deceivers, a Christian response to them, and an explanation of the false teachings.

A Description of the Deceivers

Similar to the approach used in the letter to 1 Timothy, Paul will now present us with a contrast. Based on what we learn from his first letter to Timothy, we should not be surprised to see another comparison between what a godly elder looks like and what the false teachers or deceivers in Crete appear to be.

At the start of verse 10, these deceivers were numerous, and we are told they were rebellious people—unruly and insubordinate. You might recall that in chapter 1 of 1 Timothy, Paul described the false teachers in Ephesus as "lawless." The same label applies to the teachers in Crete, as they were insubordinate and lawless. These false teachers were neither capable nor willing to obey God. They also could not submit to God's authority. Their teachings and lifestyles exposed their disobedience.

Instead of teaching what is sound, Paul describes them as "empty talkers.' Suitable synonyms for these "empty talkers" could be long-winded, but not worth listening to. Listening to them brought no spiritual benefit. Instead of sound, healthy doctrine, they became promoters of heresy.

In 1 Timothy 1:6, Paul mentions that some individuals have strayed in "vain discussion." In his second letter to Timothy 2:16, they are called "irreverent babblers who lead people into ungodliness." They are deceivers and liars, much like Satan, the ultimate deceiver and father of all lies. Through their deception, they pull people away from sound doctrine.

Some of them, at least, were Jewish. They belonged to the circumcision group. In verse 14, the apostle tells us these deceivers dedicate themselves to Jewish myths. Possibly similar to the Jewish false teachers in Ephesus, who crafted elaborate genealogies and wild allegorical stories from the Old Testament.

You may recall that in 1 Timothy 6, we examined the cause, nature, and effects of false teaching in Ephesus. Here in Crete, we can identify the cause as insubordination, which is a refusal to submit to apostolic authority. This false teaching is pointless, empty talk. Its effect is simply to deceive people, leading them away from Christ.

A Christian Response to the Deceivers

What is the proper way to respond to these false teachers? Paul provides us with the course of action. In verse 11, we are told they must be silenced. These words convey urgency. Paul does not recommend patient dialogue or peaceful arbitration simply for the sake of so-called unity in the church. Paul is very clear about what needs to be done. These false teachers must be stopped.

The Greek word in this verse means "mouth." Their mouths need to be muzzled. When you have an aggressive dog that has bitten people before and it's in a public place, what should you do? You put a muzzle on the animal so it can't bite someone. That is the idea being expressed here.

Another course of action, the apostle tells us in verse 13, is to rebuke them sharply. Notice, though, that Paul's goal was not to humiliate the Cretans but to save them from error and establish them in truth. He wants them to be "sound in faith." One of the apostles' strategies for silencing false teachers is to build believers who are sound in the faith. Proclaiming the truth through the power of the Holy Spirit is a way to remove error from the church and correct those who are deceived.

These false teachers must be silenced because their teachings are destroying entire families. The Greek concept in verse 11 is that they destroy "whole" or "entire" households with their deceptive lies.

A Description of the False Teaching

What were these false teachers teaching? What errors were they spreading in Crete? We might not have all the details, but we can describe what they taught as best as we can. In verses 12 and 13, it seems that in the ancient world, it was widely known that, as a general rule, people from Crete were liars, wicked, and lazy.

Many commentators note that this saying by a Cretan prophet about the people of Crete was written centuries before Paul and became a widely accepted idea. In the first century, Cretans

gained a reputation for theft, and the island was known as a refuge for thieves and pirates. The famous Roman politician and statesman Cicero wrote, "Cretans consider piracy an honorable practice." Such was the world to which the gospel was sent, and by God's sovereign grace, hearts were changed.

While it does not specify the exact content of the false teachers, it shows that their teachings were based on deception. We are told in verse 14 that they "Dedicated themselves to Jewish myths and fables." As mentioned earlier, these were probably elaborate allegorical stories and genealogies that were not grounded in the revealed truth of the Old Testament.

These Jewish myths resembled the teachings in Ephesus, as Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 1:1. This teaching of myths and legends might have been similar to what was preached in the Catholic Church before the 16th-century Protestant Reformation. It was a time when the focus was not on preaching Scripture but on sharing stories about saints and various miraculous acts and experiences.

We also learn from verse 14 that these teachers taught the "commands of people who turn away from the truth." This suggests a very legalistic mindset. Fallen human nature is not friendly to grace. There is something in sinful man that must add to their salvation instead of accepting it by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

These false teachers "turn away from the truth." Like the false teachers at Ephesus, they have corrupted their minds and consciences. Seared and hardened, no doubt, to the point where sin no longer bothers them. The last point I want to make from verse 16 is that these teachers were self-deceived. They believed that what they were teaching was from God. Paul says that they "professed to know God."

The truth, however, was that they were completely "unfit for any good work." The word unfit here means "disqualified." Brothers, "good work," the kind that honors God, comes from faith and love for Jesus Christ. May the Lord make each of us able to serve Him. Amen.

Titus Chapter 2

Pastoral Duties

As he often does in his letters, the Apostle Paul begins another contrast at the start of chapter two, stating, "But as for you." In chapter one, especially verses 10 through 16, Paul describes the false teachers and concludes that they are "detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work." At that point, he responds emphatically to Titus, "But as for you, teach what agrees with sound doctrine," using the word "sound" again, which means "healthy" doctrine.

Grammatically, in chapter one, Paul gives Titus only one imperative, one command. In verse 13 of chapter one, he instructs Titus to "rebuke sharply" these false teachers. Moving into chapters 2 and 3, the apostle will now present numerous imperative statements. In fact, the entire letter has 14 imperative statements, 13 of which are in chapters 2 and 3.

Why does that matter? As a pastoral letter, we naturally want to understand the pastor's role. These imperative commands teach us, just as they did Titus, how to respond to people and situations within the church. They guide us in understanding our pastoral duties.

There are three main groups of people in the church that the Apostle Paul is eager to instruct Titus about in his pastoral duties: teaching men, teaching women, and teaching workers. This is similar to the instruction in 1 Timothy chapter 5, where Paul addresses both older and younger men, as well as older and younger women. It is followed by a detailed discussion on widows in the church, along with guidance for slaves, similar to what is found in 1 Timothy chapter 6. Here, in Titus, Paul follows a similar pattern but does not mention widows in the churches this time.

The order Paul follows begins in verse 2 with older men, continues in verses 3 to 5 with younger women, moves to verse 6 with young men, then covers verses 7 to 8 about Titus himself, and finally addresses verses 9 to 10 on slaves. There is, of course, considerable overlap with the letter to Timothy at Ephesus, as both were younger men responsible for leading God's people.

Teaching for Men and Titus

They are to be instructed by older men on what aligns with sound doctrine. They are to be "sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness." Many characteristics of older men in Christ are similar to some of the requirements for serving as church leaders.

Sober-minded, or temperate, refers to a man of moderation who avoids excess in anything. Dignified, or we might say "worthy of respect," means their attitude shows a certain seriousness about the Christian life and walking with Christ. Paul insists that older men should be self-controlled. This is the same word Paul uses to describe a qualification for pastors in 1:8.

Most importantly, these older men should be healthy or sound in three areas: faith, love, and steadfastness. In Greek, an article comes before each word, showing that each trait has special importance and focus. The apostle wants older men to show a strong trust in God, making it a clear part of their character. Brothers, are these traits something you want more and more of in life?

Andrew Bonar, a 19th-century Scottish minister, wrote: "Remember that very few men and very few ministers keep up to the end the edge that was on their spirit at the first." In other words, Bonar suggests that very few Christian men continue to grow, develop, and mature spiritually throughout their lives. Many are no longer the men they once were in their younger days.

Pray, brothers, that this will not be true of us. May our love for Christ and desire to do good grow more and more until we are with Him. Moving on to verse 6, we see instructions given to Titus regarding younger men. The word "Likewise" indicates a new group. Titus's task is to urge young men to practice self-control, be sound in mind, and "control" their youthful passions.

In chapter 2, "self-control" is the most frequently mentioned trait. It appears five times in that chapter: verses 2, 4, 5, 6, and 12. As noted earlier, it is also a key characteristic for the office

of an Elder. This should help us understand how much God values self-control in His church and in individual lives.

The Apostle Paul stresses the importance of the mind. Remember that the false teachers in Crete are trying to lead people away from the simplicity of God's grace in the Gospel. It is essential for these young men to develop sound minds and self-control to avoid being swayed by the lies of the devil and false teachers.

In his book *Opening Up Titus*, David Campbell states, "Sober mindedness, or self-control, as we saw in connection with old men, is a whole life thing. It has a positive and wholesome impact on our speech, our behavior, the decisions we make in life, the counsel we give to others, and the ways in which we respond to various situations in life. Its value cannot be overstated."

Having self-control reflects the result of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. The fallen, sinful person cannot show this self-control. Oh, that we had more of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts. Paul speaks directly to Titus in verses 7 and 8: "Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us."

Clearly, the apostle speaks to Titus as a Christian leader in the church. These words should strongly apply to anyone in a leadership role among God's people. As a church leader, Titus needs to set a good example for others to follow. He should demonstrate doing good. That is a very important and challenging task for church elders. As a leader in your church, Christians should look at you and think, "That is the way I should live."
There should be nothing evil they can say. That is what it means to be "above reproach."

John Stott encapsulates it well regarding motive, manner, and matter. The leader of Christ's church should be characterized by purity of motive, unlike the false teachers in 1:7 who are "greedy for gain." The leader should speak with a serious demeanor. We are not talking about being somber. Serious in the sense that you are handling eternal matters and proclaiming the authoritative Word of God. Lastly, the leader is sound in doctrine, offering healthy, edifying teaching for his flock.

Teaching for Women

In verses 3 through 5, Paul has a message for women. The apostle often begins this section about women with the word "likewise." First, he addresses older women in the church. Titus is to challenge them with four qualities. They must first be reverent in their behavior. Next, they must not be slanderers. Third, they must not be excessive drinkers. Lastly, Titus is to instruct older women that they must "teach what is good." Given the highly immoral nature of Cretan society, the older woman who meets these criteria would undoubtedly stand out.

Verse 4 begins with a Greek hina clause, which means it functions as a purpose statement. It explains why older women in verse 3 should demonstrate the four qualities mentioned. In other words, older women are called to embody the virtues listed: reverent, not slanderers, not given to excess, and teachers of what is good—not as an end in itself. Instead, their role is to encourage and mentor younger women. Today's church desperately needs mature, experienced Christian women to guide and support the next generation.

The Apostle Paul offers guidance for young women in three pairs, beginning and ending with their relationships with their husbands. First, they are expected to be specific types of wives and mothers. They should love their husbands and children. Second, younger women in the church are to develop Christian character. They must be self-controlled, as we've seen many times, and pure. In this context, that probably means virtuous and chaste. Third, these younger women should take part in activities with the right attitude. They should be "homemakers," which literally means busy at home, and "kind." Finally, they should be "submissive to their husbands."

These qualities should be evident to honor the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul consistently emphasized that young women, and indeed all believers, must honor God in their lives. God's desire is for believers to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in doing so, reflect how God's love and grace can transform lives.

The Christian life and lifestyle should serve as a testimony to the power of God's grace. As verse 10 shows, the believer must "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior."

Teaching for Workers

The final group that the Apostle Paul will address in this section is in verses 9 and 10. The first thing to observe is that, in a list of instructions based on gender and age, the Apostle Paul now shifts focus away from these categories to address Christians who are in bondage as slaves. We saw this earlier in 1 Timothy at the start of chapter 6.

It is estimated that approximately 25% of the Roman world was enslaved in the 1st century. As horrible and disturbing as the practice of slavery is, at any point in history, it's worth noting that in the New Testament letters, Paul's primary concern is not to overturn the slavery system. He does have a word for slaves in his first letter to the Corinthians in 7:21 when he wrote, "Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you, although if you can gain your freedom, do so."

The Apostle's primary concern for the believer is the kingdom of God, not this temporary world. There is a common element among these Christian groups. Paul's main message is that believers should share the gospel in a world that doesn't believe. Adorning the doctrine of God our Savior is the apostle's top priority.

The Greek verb "adorn" was used to describe arranging jewelry to display their beauty. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a treasure. It is a pearl of great value. Through His words and life, the person in Christ should reflect a piece of this precious treasure to a lost world full of sin. This closely resembles the message the apostle delivered to Timothy about the slaves in Ephesus. Chapter 6, verse 1 of 1 Timothy states, "Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled."

No matter who we are in this world—rich, poor, famous, unknown, kings, or slaves—the first priority as believers is to honor Jesus Christ by living out the gospel. That, in a nutshell, is Paul's message to Titus and Timothy. That is why bondservants are to submit to their masters, why they should please them, why they must not talk back, and the reason for showing good faith.

Theological Framework and Motivation for Ministry

The next part covers chapter two, verses 11 through 15. It is called a "theological framework and motivation for ministry." Note the familiar connecting word "for" at the beginning of verse 11. What does it connect to? It links to the end of verse 10, where Paul writes, "God our Savior."
It is a common pattern in the Apostle Paul's letters that once he mentions "God our Savior," words like the "gospel of grace," "the cross," and many other phrases activate his thoughts, prompting him to elaborate on the subject again and again, and to burst into praise to the Lord. Like a young child who has just learned something new and wants to tell his parents, Paul must praise the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle highlights two main reasons for committed service to Christ in this section. They are, first, God's saving grace, and second, the hope of the Lord Jesus' return. It is important to understand the context of the different groups of people Paul describes in verses 1 through 10. Each group of believers is called to live lives that honor God.

Then, in verse 12, he provides the answer. God's grace teaches believers to reject ungodliness and live righteously while awaiting the Savior's return. In short, as one of the main messages of the Pastoral letters emphasizes, proper Christ-centered behavior comes from proper theology. In other words, sound doctrine must lead to a Christ-honoring life. If it doesn't, and you claim to be a Christian, you're fooling yourself.

Grace of God

The grace of God is a powerful force for believers in Christ. We often hear grace defined as God's unmerited favor. That is true, but there is so much more that could be said.
R.C. Sproul wrote, "When we truly understand grace, when we see that God only owes us wrath but has provided Christ's merit to cover our demerit, then everything changes. The Christian motivation for ethics is not merely to obey some abstract law or a list of rules; rather, our response is provoked by gratitude. Jesus understood that when He said, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments.' If I may have the liberty to paraphrase: 'Keep My commandments not because you want to be just, but because you love Me.' A true understanding of grace, of God's unmerited favor, always provokes a life of gratitude and obedience."

Grace brings about new life in Christ and helps us live Christian lives in an evil world after conversion. Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Philippi 2:12-13, "Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence but now even more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good purpose."

The truth is that for the believer, God's grace should inspire us to love Christ so deeply that sin becomes completely offensive, and we desire nothing to do with it. We need to reach a point in our Christian journey where the pleasure of sin no longer outweighs the guilt and separation from the Lord. A good way to assess your spiritual well-being is to ask if you hate sin and want to be free from it.

The Puritan John Owen, in his well-known book titled "Mortification of Sin," wrote, "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." It is a shame, but in today's world, even Christians do not like to be told they are sinners. How much we need grace. At my church, and maybe yours, we often sing the well-known hymn "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." The lyrics say, "O to grace, how great a debtor I'm constrained to be daily. Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee,"

If we relied only on ourselves, we would be no match for sin and Satan. But if we are in Christ, we are not left to ourselves. Grace teaches us to say no to sinful passions and also shows us how to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age. The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to everyone. The apostle emphasizes that God's grace has revealed itself and is now freely available to all people.

So, the first requirement for ministry and living a Christ-centered life is God's grace in Christ Jesus. Brothers, our ongoing sanctification, the process of becoming more like Jesus Christ, also relies on God's grace. Paul uses similar words when writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:8 through 12.

God's purpose and grace toward us before the ages began, and our anticipation of "that Day," which is Christ's return, serve as strong motivations to serve the Lord and His people. This is the reason why we should be "zealous for good works."

Expectation of Christ's Return

In verse 12, the apostle describes the current age and how salvation through Christ affects us today. The "present age" has not yet fully ended; we are still living in it. However, there is another age in which the believer is "waiting." It is important to note that Paul's focus isn't just on the wonderful coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. His hope lies in the "appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior."

The Greek word Paul uses in Verse 13, translated as "appearing," is the word we use for epiphany, which means a manifestation or appearance of something. The root of the word epiphany in Classical Greek was used to describe the breaking of dawn each morning, as the sun reappears. It does not mean that something new comes into existence; instead, it means that something already existing appears.

I believe the main point is that the Apostle Paul highlights the long-awaited glory of Christ, which, of course, exists in heaven now and will finally be revealed to the entire world. Every eye will see, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God. What a glorious day that will be. Jesus, during His first epiphany, was humble and lowly. But it will not be that way at His next epiphany. He will come in all His glory.

The Apostle Paul highlights that the reality of the incarnation in verse 11 is the foundation of our hope for Christ's return at His second coming. Author Gordon Fee writes, "The second coming is the final manifestation of God's full glory," just as the first advent revealed God's grace.

Christ has redeemed us by purchasing us from the slave market of sin, and through grace, He is transforming His bride to be pleasing to Him. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ. What our Savior has done for us motivates each of us to be passionate about good works; in other words, eager to do the deeds that honor the Lord Jesus.

Verses 13 and 14 serve as a doxology in multiple ways. The Greek word for glory is "doxa." These verses praise and give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to note that when Paul writes of "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ," he is referring to a single person. This is one of the clearest Christological confessions in the New Testament. Jesus Christ is God.

Beware of a cult group called Jehovah's Witnesses, who often go door-to-door, handing out literature and trying to draw people into their false teachings. One of their main errors, among many, is their belief that Jesus is not the eternal God. They may seem friendly, but in reality, they are greatly deceived and are spreading a false gospel. Their claims lack solid biblical support, even though they try to justify their views with their own translation of the Bible, which is filled with heresy. If they attempt to engage you in discussion, it's helpful to start by questioning the divinity of Jesus. They will deny that Jesus is the eternal God who came into the world. They will deny that Christ is both human and divine. They will also deny the Holy Trinity. This passage in Titus and several other New Testament texts, especially John 1, clearly affirm the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do we eagerly await the day when Jesus returns and there will be a new heaven and a new earth? A world where sin is forever eradicated? I sometimes wonder if the Second Coming of Christ isn't given enough attention in Reformed churches. Maybe if it were, we would be inspired to live more Christlike lives.

That seems to be Apostle John's perspective as he discusses the future return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Writing in 1 John 3:2 through 3, he states, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." May that be our blessed hope today.

Conclusion

In verse 15, the Apostle Paul wraps up this theological framework and motivation for ministry laid out in earlier verses 11 through 14. In other words, he has just explained to Titus the theological foundation for "good works," which is God's grace in redeeming sinners and the hope of his second coming when Christ returns in glory. Verse 15 also acts as a transition into chapter 3.

Paul turns his attention directly to Titus and urges him to "teach these things." You might recall the phrase "these things," which the apostle often used in his first letter to Timothy. It serves as a summary statement, sometimes referencing previous content and other times previewing upcoming topics. Paul uses the same phrase seven times in 1 Timothy, but it appears only once in Titus.

Imperatives, often a personal charge, usually follow it. The charge, here in verse 15, contains three verbs: declare, exhort, or better translated as "encourage," and rebuke. The Greek word "declare" is the same as in 2:1, meaning "teach." Nonetheless, we observe a "literary inclusio" where the author begins and ends with the same expression. In this case, "teach" or "declare" appears in 2:1 and 2:15.

The next word, "exhort," could be translated as "encourage." I prefer "to encourage" because Paul's writing is gentler in tone than his direct writing about the false teachers. Finally, to "rebuke with all authority." Bill Mounce writes, "These instructions are given to Titus, Paul's delegate, and he is to exercise his full delegated authority. One can assume that this strong language is intended more for the Cretan church than for Titus."

The apostle concludes by telling Titus to "let no one disregard you." In some ways, aside from mentioning Titus' youth, "let no one disregard you" echoes Paul's words to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12 when he says, "Let no one despise you for your youth." That would have encouraged Titus and shown those reading the letter that they should respect and listen to him as if Paul himself were there in Crete.

Titus Chapter 3

Living as the Church in This World

The overall emphasis remains largely the same in the final chapter of the apostle's letter to his delegate, Titus, on the island of Crete. Paul continues to promote godly living for the honor and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter one, Paul highlighted the believer's sanctification within the church community. In chapter two, his focus was on different groups within the body of Christ: the older, the younger, men, women, and slaves. In chapter three, his emphasis is more on Christians in general—those living in a sinful, cursed world.

The chapter is divided into three main sections: The Christian in the World, verses 1–2; The revelation of God's kindness and love in Christ, verses 3–8; and concluding with final instructions, verses 9–15.

In chapter 3, verses 1, 8, and 14, Paul emphasizes the importance of "good works" three times. The phrase is also repeated in 1:16 and 2:7, 14. As Paul concludes in chapter 2, verse 14, he writes that because we are bought and paid for by Jesus Christ in our redemption, Christians must be "zealous for good works."

This "good works" message appears often in the New Testament. It is always a result of, not the cause of, God's grace. Ephesians 2:10 states, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." It emphasizes this point like the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:12, "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

It is also a point our Lord emphasizes in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 5:16 states, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

The Christian in the World

In verses 1 and 2, Paul teaches Titus how believers should behave and their attitude toward civil authorities and "all people" in general. In chapter two, Paul instructed wives and slaves

to submit. He now expands this by emphasizing the importance of all believers submitting to rulers and authorities.

These initial two verses contain seven commands, with "submit" being the main directive. There are two specific evangelistic reasons that explain why Christians need to follow these commands. The first is being "ready or prepared for every good work." The idea is that being submissive to authorities, avoiding slander, not fighting, and demonstrating kindness and gentleness to everyone are the preparations necessary for "good works."

The second reason obeying these commands is so important is that it enhances our gospel witness and testimony to a world that is lost in sin. This is always the concern of the Apostle Paul for the Christian. In chapter 1, verse 16, Paul describes the false teachers. They "profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work."

The traits of the false teachers, outlined earlier in the letter in 1:10-12, are "insubordinate, empty talkers, deceivers, teaching for shameful gain, liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons." By God's grace, believers are meant to be the exact opposite of the false teachers. We should avoid speaking ill of others; it's essential to steer clear of arguments and to be gentle and courteous. Your sanctification brings honor and support to the Gospel. A sinful life is, in fact, the opposite.

Do you see what Paul is doing? He's comparing and contrasting the believer with the unbeliever. Just as the false teacher is "unfit" for good works, the believer must be fit and "ready for every good work." This is how a Christian shines his light before others so they may see good deeds and give glory to our Father who is in heaven.

The Revelation of God's Kindness and Love in Christ

Moving on to our next set of verses, the apostle does at least two things. He gives a wonderful description of God's work of salvation in the life of the believer. Second, he offers the main reasons why believers should be gentle, courteous, loving, kind, and involved in "good works."

In verse 3, Paul lists a series of sins that describe the past depravity of believers before their conversion. In chapter 3, verses 4 through 7, he provides a wonderful description of God's power in the work of regeneration. These verses establish the theological foundation for all the good works that Christians pursue. Finally, in verse 8, we see another "trustworthy saying" that connects back to verses 4 through 7. As with these sayings, the topic is salvation in Christ.

In his commentary on Titus, John Calvin writes, "Nothing is better suited to humble our pride and simultaneously temper our harshness than showing that everything we direct at others can rebound on ourselves." Undoubtedly, a person who believes in Christ should be the humblest individual in the world. We must genuinely believe in our hearts that we are not better than anyone else. We understand that a horrible, sinful nature stays within us, and if it weren't for God's grace, we would quickly fall into the same old sins.

Titus 3:3 closely resembles the letter Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, describing their spiritual condition before coming to faith. In Ephesians 2:1–3, Paul discusses being dead in trespasses and sins and following the ways of this world.

In Titus 3:3, the Holy Spirit reminds us that all salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ is His work, not ours, by listing the depraved characteristics of a person outside of Christ before regeneration. It also teaches us the great need we have for salvation. In ourselves, we have absolutely nothing to boast about. We will carry our sinful nature to the grave.

Jeremiah 17:9 states, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can understand it?" Galatians 5:17 declares, "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing what you want to do." Our attitude and thoughts about pride and boasting should reflect those of the Apostle Paul, who wrote to the Galatians in 6:14, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

The final stanza of the beloved Christian hymn "Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted" should serve as our heartfelt prayer: "Here we have a firm foundation, here the refuge of the lost. Christ's the Rock of our salvation, His the name of which we boast. Lamb of God, for sinners

wounded, Sacrifice to cancel guilt. None shall ever be confounded, who on him their hope has built."

Maybe you've wondered why God allows us to keep struggling with sin, even after we are born again. Could it be that our sinful nature stays with us until we leave this world because it humbles us and helps us realize how much we need the Holy Spirit's help to grow in sanctification?

Verse 3 states, "For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another." Verse 4, however, says, "When the goodness and lovingkindness of God appeared!" We should really appreciate the "buts" in Scripture. The apostle often uses the word "but" to contrast what the Christian once was—dead in sin—with what they are now—alive in Christ.

In the ESV, the Greek word "loving kindness" is "Philanthropia," which is where we get our English word for Philanthropist. It combines two Greek words that are likely familiar to us: Phileo, meaning Love, and Anthropos, meaning Man. The Apostle Paul uses this word only once across all his writings. It is fascinating and wonderful that it is used in the context of God's response to the deep need we all have because of sin's corruption.

The common understanding of "Philanthropist" today is not the primary meaning used in Scripture. The Word of God presents a much broader view of philanthropy than what we're usually accustomed to. It's more than just wealthy people donating to a favorite cause, regardless of how noble the reason.

While it is admirable that individuals like Bill Gates and Warren Buffett donate billions to various charitable causes, Scripture's emphasis on philanthropy broadens the definition to include both the physical and spiritual aspects of man. The main point to remember is that God's response to our need for mercy and grace forms the basis for our own acts of good works and love toward our neighbor. It is the foundation for "good works."

We might say that God's philanthropy, demonstrated by sending Christ and redeeming us, forms the foundation of Christians' concern and compassion for the world. Our own

proclamation of Christ and not turning a blind eye to the needs of those around us shows the world that we belong to Christ.

Many biblical scholars believe that this section in Titus is probably another creedal statement used in early church worship. If that's true, then verses 5 through 7 are essential to it. Verse 5 states, "He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit."

God saves believers not because they earn it but because He is merciful. Works of righteousness have no influence on God's decision to save. How difficult is it for the natural man to accept this? If we went out on the street, asked every person passing by how to get to heaven, sadly, most would say, "Well, I have lived a decent life and haven't been too bad. I have helped people as much as I can and supported this charity and that charity. I think God will accept me." No, no, no. Those are "works of righteousness," which is the hope of a Pharisee.

The main clause in verses 3 through 8 is the phrase "he saved us." In his comments on this part of Titus, John Stott calls verses 3 through 7 the "Ingredients of Salvation." Verse 3 clearly shows the "need of salvation," followed by the "source of salvation," which is the kindness and love of God our Savior, as seen at the beginning of verse 4.

Then we have the "ground of salvation," which is His mercy in sending our Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul mentions our Savior's appearance in 3:4, which should remind us of the epiphany in 2:11, where Paul writes, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people." Next, the means of salvation are washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

I believe the washing mentioned here is not meant to be baptism, although many commentators hold that view. I agree with William Hendrickson, who writes, "The washing referred to is wholly spiritual." This is definitely what our Savior was referring to in John 3:5, "Truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

The Holy Spirit sanctifies believers through regeneration and renewal, transforming them into a new creation in Christ. Water throughout the Bible symbolizes spiritual cleansing. The apostle likely thought of the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel 36:25 through 27 states, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." That is the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

The term "regeneration," when referring to individuals, is found only in this one passage in the New Testament. The Greek word literally means "new birth." Although the specific word "regeneration" in relation to an individual appears only once here in Titus, the idea of spiritual rebirth is mentioned multiple times throughout the New Testament.

Perhaps the most well-known example is the words of our Savior in John 3:3. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." We can say that unless someone undergoes the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, they cannot see the kingdom of God.

Along with regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul discusses the process of renewal. This "renewal" represents the believer's sanctification in the Lord Jesus Christ. Question 35 from Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, "What is sanctification?" Answer: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole person after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

Chapter 13 of the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, in its first paragraph, describes biblical Sanctification, or renewal, as it is called here in Titus 3: "Those who are united to Christ and effectually called and regenerated have a new heart and a new spirit created in them through the power of Christ's death and resurrection. They are also further sanctified, really and personally, through the same power, by his Word and Spirit dwelling in them. The dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the various evil desires that arise from it are more and more weakened and put to death. At the same time, those called and regenerated

are more and more enlivened and strengthened in all saving graces so that they practice true holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

Classic Reformed theology teaches that sanctification has two aspects. The first is definitive sanctification, which is given to the believer as part of our union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord prayed in John 17 that His disciples would be sanctified, made holy. This is a crucial and essential truth in any study of sanctification. The believer's holiness is directly connected to the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Great High Priest is the foundation for the sanctification of all believers.

The Christian is considered holy because he or she is united with the Lord Jesus Christ. John 17:19 states, "For them, I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified." First Corinthians 1:30 declares, "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption."

The second aspect of this sanctification in traditional Reformed theology is called progressive sanctification. It is the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ, which occurs throughout a believer's life. The aim of progressive sanctification is transformation. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:17 through 18, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

Then, in Romans 12:2, the apostle writes, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing, and perfect will." In summary, this renewal is the process of growing more holy before our Holy God. Is that your heart's desire today? Robert Murray M'Cheyne, a devout Scottish pastor from long ago, often prayed, "Lord, make me as holy as it is possible for a saved sinner to be."

The renowned Puritan theologian John Owen said, "Let not that man think he makes any progress in holiness who walks not over the bellies of his lusts." Oh, that God, by His grace, would enable each of us to hate sin and become more like our Lord Jesus Christ. That is an example of progressive sanctification.

Another result of this rich passage, which I wish we had more time to discuss, is that the regenerated believer is "justified." The doctrine of justification is a common topic for the Apostle Paul in the New Testament and holds great significance for biblical Christianity. Professor John Murray, a Scottish theologian who taught at Westminster Seminary in the United States for most of his life, offers a constructive definition of this doctrine.

He writes, "Justification is that aspect of the application of redemption whereby God delivers us from condemnation, accepts us as righteous in his sight, and receives us into his favor and fellowship. It is an act of God, accomplished in time, wherein God passes judgment with respect to us as individuals. Justification is a judicial or forensic term and refers to a judgment conceived, recognized, and declared with respect to judicial status."

This is very important, and you should understand it clearly. Justification does not mean making someone righteous, upright, or holy; it means to declare oneself righteous. What a glorious truth! In Jesus Christ, through His perfect obedience and righteousness, and based on His atonement and resurrection, God declares the sinner just in His eyes in the divine courtroom. If that doesn't make us rejoice, nothing will. That, brothers, is worthy of our praise to God.

Perhaps one of the clearest and most concise passages about God's work in renewal is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

The final aspect of this great salvation, as Paul mentions in verse 7, is the wonderful goal of God's work: the sure and certain hope of eternal life. Listen again to Titus 3:7: "So that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." This is the same hope Paul refers to at the beginning of this letter in verse 2 of chapter 1. There he wrote, "In hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began."

The heirs are those who are both transformed and declared righteous by God. William Mounce writes about this text, "The ultimate goal of God's initiative and Christ's and the Spirit's labors is that believers become heirs of eternal life."

This passage illustrates that the great work of salvation, which was planned and purposed before the beginning of time, is a work of the Holy Trinity. Notice that both God, in verse 4, and Jesus Christ, in verse 6, are identified as "our Savior." In verse 5, the Holy Spirit is described as the means or power behind it—the "washing of regeneration and renewal." Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Trustworthy Sayings

We reach another "Trustworthy Saying" in verse 8. In verses 4 through 7, the Apostle Paul makes one of the most beautiful and profound statements in Scripture about God's work of salvation. It is a work of redemption in Christ that spans past, present, and future. It is probably verses 4 through 7 that Paul is referring to when he writes, "The saying is trustworthy." Commentators are quite divided. In other words, in this case, he refers to what he has just written, not what he is about to write. This is not always true for the Apostle Paul's "trustworthy sayings." There are a total of 5 trustworthy sayings in the Pastoral Letters. They seem to refer back twice, and three times, they appear to mean what Paul is about to write.

Once again, the apostle emphasizes that if we truly possess this great salvation in Christ just described, good works will show the faith we have. Titus 3:8 states, "The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people."

John Stott adds "good works" as another "ingredient" of salvation. He reminds us that "good works" for the glory of our Savior is evidence that we know and love him. Titus must "insist" that believers diligently dedicate themselves to good works. When we interview someone who wants to join our church, I often read Ephesians 2:10 and ask whether they have considered how they can serve the Lord through the works He has prepared for them. Ephesians 2:10 states, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Final Instructions

As we conclude the Apostle Paul's letter to Titus, we move on to the section titled "Final Instructions." Throughout church history, some men have caused major divisions within the church, while others have been a great blessing and encouragement to the saints. In these final instructions, Paul writes to Titus to help him understand how to deal with both kinds of people.

In verses 9 through 11, the apostle revisits a topic he discussed earlier in the letter, in chapter one, verses 10 through 16: empty talkers and deceivers. The apostle begins verse 9 with the familiar word "but," indicating an immediate contrast. That is exactly what we find. Verses 9 through 11 contrast with what Paul wrote in verses 1 through 8 of chapter 3.

You might remember that avoiding foolish controversies and genealogies was a topic Paul discussed in his first letter to Timothy in 1:3-7. Paul also addresses this same subject in his second letter to Timothy. There, he writes in 2 Timothy 2:23, "Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels." Here in Titus, once again, Jewish myths taught by false teachers are the source of the problem in Crete.

The Apostle, being the apostle, does not ignore the problem. He takes it seriously. How many church leaders have failed to act because they didn't want to confront people? Although most of us dislike confrontation, including myself, we must address false teaching when it occurs. Why? It leads to arguments, is unproductive, and harms both Christ's cause and the believer.

How should these people be handled? Paul tells Titus in verse 9 that we are to avoid foolishness, but that's only part of what's needed. The individual or individuals spreading controversy must be confronted. If anyone in the church has taught or believed what these false teachers presented, Paul emphasizes that we should first warn them. If they refuse to listen to the warning, you must warn them a second time. If the second warning fails, we are instructed to have no further involvement with them.

It is important to note that Paul does not give Titus all the details on how to handle church discipline. The passage in Titus, however, is closely similar to Matthew 18:15–17, where

Jesus gives instructions on discipline. Of course, the main goal is to promote Christ-honoring teaching while doing everything possible to preserve Christian unity within the body. However, unity should never be prioritized if false teaching causes division and leads people away from the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, the apostle concludes the letter with personal instructions and greetings.

Paul's initial instruction is for Titus to meet him in Nicopolis, where he plans to spend the winter. Nicopolis was the capital of one of the Roman provinces, located near present-day Preveza, Greece. Sitting on the Adriatic Sea, it was well known in ancient times for its two harbors. It was over 300 miles from Crete, which would have taken about five to ten days to travel by sea.

Titus was not supposed to leave until a replacement arrived, either Artemas, an unknown figure in the New Testament, or Tychicus, a well-known associate of the apostle from the province of Asia. Tychicus delivered Paul's letters to Ephesus and Colossae. See Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, and 2 Timothy 4:12. It was probably Artemas who replaced Titus in Crete. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul mentions that Titus was sent to Dalmatia and Tychicus was sent to Ephesus.

Then Titus was to help Zena, the lawyer, and assist Apollos, who, as we learn elsewhere in the New Testament, was an eloquent speaker. Just before his final words of "Grace to all," we should notice that a familiar concern is mentioned again. In verse 14, "Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works."

We will conclude our discussion of Titus in this manner. We should learn to dedicate ourselves to Christ's cause, and as church elders and teachers, we must encourage our fellow Christians to undertake the important task of expanding Christ's kingdom. Amen.

Epistle to Titus Outline

Opening Salutation (1:1-4)

A. Paul's apostolic mission

1. The faith of God's elect

2. The truth that leads to godliness

3. The hope of eternal life

4. The preaching

The Elders (1:5-9)

A. Summary Elder/Bishop (xref. 1 Timothy 3:1-13)

- https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-13-how-recognize-elder-titus-15-9-1-timothy-31-7

1. One and the same office

2. Plurality of overseers

3. Teaching gifts

4. Congregation Approval

B. Blameless in three areas

1. Home life

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUBjneThxdo

2. Character

Five **vices** xref. 1 Timothy 3

- Not arrogant or (not overbearing), 1 Tim 3:2, “temperate”, 2 Peter 2:10, Proverbs 21:24
- Not hot-tempered (not quarrelsome), 1 Tim 3:3
- Not an excessive drinker (not a drunkard), 1Tim 3:3, 1 Tim 3:8, Eph. 5:18
- Not a bully or violent, 1 Tim 3:3
- Not greedy for money, 1 Tim 3:3, 1 Tim 3:8, 1 Peter 5:2

Six positive **virtues, cross reference** - 1 Timothy 3

- Hospitable, 1 Tim 3:3, 1 Peter 4:9, Heb. 13:2, 3 John 8
- Loving what is good (no exact equivalent in 1 Tim 3)
- Sensible or self-controlled, 1 Tim 3:2, Titus 2:2, Titus 2:5
- Righteous or upright (respectable) 1 Tim 3:2, Titus 2:12, Phil 4:8, Col 4:1

- Holy, (no exact equivalent in 1 Tim 3) but see 1 Tim 2:8, Heb 7:26
- Self-controlled or disciplined 1 Tim 3:2 (see "sensible" above)

3. Doctrine

The Cretan Opposition (1:10-16)

A. A description of the deceiver

B. A Christian response to the deceivers

C. A description of the false teaching

Titus 2

I. Pastoral duties (2:1-10)

A. Teaching for men/Titus (2:1-2, 2:6-8)

B. Teaching for women (2:3-5)

C. Teaching for workers (2:9,10)

Theological framework and motivation for ministry (2:11-15)

A. Motivation for Ministry

1. The grace of God

2. Expectation of Christ's return

C. Conclusion

Titus 3

Living as the Church in this world (3:1-8)

A. The Christian in the world (3:1-2)

1. Evangelistic reasons for obedience

a) Preparation of "good works"

b) Honor and glorify Jesus Christ

B. The revelation of God's kindness and love in Christ (3:3-8)

1. The ultimate reasons for "good works"

a) Our depravity by nature

b) God's kindness and love - "Philanthropy"

c) "Ingredients of salvation"

(1) Need

(2) Source

(3) Ground

(4) Means

(5) Results

- What is sanctification? (See article)

- What is justification? (See article)

(6) Goal

2. “Trustworthy saying”

a) Prior text

b) Evidence

Final Instructions (3:9-15)

A. Dealing with divisive members (3:9-11)

B. Concluding personal instructions and final greetings (3:12-15)